

IN THE UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT
FOR THE WESTERN DISTRICT OF NEW YORK

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA,

vs

MARK MASECCHIA

Docket No. 19-CR-227JLS

Defendant

DEFENDANT'S SENTENCING MEMORANDUM

PRELIMINARY STATEMENT

It is respectfully requested that the Court take into account the factors set forth below in determining this Defendant's sentence. Pursuant to 18 U.S.C. §3553(a), it is submitted that these factors support a sentence of not more than 84 months. It is well established that district courts "may not presume that the Guidelines range is reasonable" and instead "must make an individualized assessment based on the facts presented". *United States v. Williams*, 574 F. 3d 209, 215(2dCir. 2008) (quoting *Gall v. United States*, 552 U.S. 38, 49-50(2007)). The requested sentence would satisfy the requirement of a sentence sufficient but not greater than necessary to comply with the purposes of 18 U.S.C. §3553(a).

In the Plea Agreement, the parties agreed, pursuant to Fed. R. Crim. P. §11(c)(1)(C) to a sentencing range of 84-96 months (7-8 years). It is respectfully requested that the Court accept the parties' Plea Agreement and impose the sentence requested above.

It is acknowledged that the Court must first correctly calculate the

the applicable Guideline range. *Gall v. United States*, 552 U.S. 38, 128 S. Ct. 586, 596 (2007). However, the Guidelines must be treated as advisory. *United States v. Ratoballi*, 452 F. 3d 127(2d Cir. 2006). The Guidelines do not create a legal presumption with regard to the appropriate sentence. *Rita v. United States*, 551 U.S. 338, 127 S. Ct. (2007). As set forth below, the section 3553(a) factors when considered together with the advisory guidelines provide a justification for the requested sentence.

TITLE 18 U.S.C. §3553(a) FACTORS

The Defendant, Michael Masecchia is presently 55 years of age, married and the father of three children. His mother is 85 years of age. Mike is a school teacher who is proud of his 30 years working for the Buffalo Board of Education. As the letters, which accompany this Memorandum, attest, Mike is respected by his teaching colleagues and the administrators at the school where he teaches. This has been a great source of pride to Mike who, on a regular basis, has volunteered to provide additional support and services to his students.

One has to ask the question, how does the individual described in the preceding paragraph find himself standing before this Court facing a lengthy prison sentence? It is a question that Mike Masecchia asks himself on a daily basis. By most standards, he has a wonderful life. A loving family, an elderly mother whom he visits regularly and a rewarding occupation. Unfortunately, Mike, when he was much younger, began growing marijuana. As a young person doing this, he never fully appreciated the gravity of his conduct. He

knew it was wrong, indeed, knew it was illegal, but did not understand the extent to which he was engaged in criminal activity. Over time, he thought little of the illegality of his conduct and continued to engage in this activity.

Mike is an avid hunter and outdoorsman. He collected a number of firearms hunting purposes and was given more by friends and relatives. He kept these at a hunting camp until very shortly before his arrest when he brought them to his residence. He acknowledges that while they were at the hunting camp, where the marijuana was grown, they were available to him to protect his marijuana crop.

With his arrest on the instant charges, Mike has been forced to confront the reality that he has been ignoring for so many years. He has gone from being a respected parent, son and educator to being a convicted felon. He has spent a lifetime earning the respect and admiration of his wife, son, daughters, mother and colleagues. Now, when he looks into their eyes, he sees the disappointment. On more than one occasion, he has remarked that his parents had raised him to know right from wrong and to be a better person than he has been. Throughout their lives, Mike has worked hard to instill positive values in his children. He recognizes that they understand that while he was saying one thing, he was doing another. This has caused him an untoward amount of anguish.

Upon the completion of his sentence, Mike has vowed to commit the remainder of his life to earning back the respect of those whom he has disappointed. He acknowledges that the circumstances in which he finds himself are entirely of his own doing. No one made him engage in the conduct for which he has plead guilty. The decision to engage in this conduct was his

alone. As a consequence of his decision making, not only will he be incarcerated for a significant period of time, but also, he will be terminated from his employment with the Buffalo Board of Education, lose his New York State teachers certificate, and suffer the personal humiliation for the damage he has done to his family, colleagues and his chosen profession.

If, as requested, the Court accepts the parties' Plea Agreement, the sentencing range to which Mike is exposed is between seven and eight years. It is respectfully submitted that there is no danger of Mike Masecchia re-offending. Having said that, he recognizes the need for punishment and also the need for the Court to address the issue of general deterrence. It is further submitted that a seven year sentence will satisfy both of these sentencing objectives. If a seven year sentence is imposed, Mike will be approximately 62 years of age when he is released from prison. Any term of incarceration is a hardship on the person serving the time. Indeed, this fact is a sentencing objective, namely, to impose punishment. In the case of Mike Masecchia, serving a prison sentence, when one is in his late fifties and early sixties, will be particularly difficult. The Court is asked to take this factor into consideration in determining the appropriate sentence.

Finally, it is requested that Mike be allowed to voluntarily surrender. He possesses the intent and means to do so. His unblemished record while on pretrial release demonstrates that he poses no danger to the community or risk of flight. Moreover, voluntary surrender will allow Mike to avoid exposure to Covid-19 while being held locally during the time the Bureau of Prisons needs to designate him to the facility where he will serve his sentence.

Accompanying this Memorandum are letters which speak to Mike's good qualities and provide a basis for the Court to be reassured that there is no danger of his re-offending.

REQUESTED SENTENCE

The Defendant requests that the Court consider the imposition of a sentence of not more than 84 months.

Dated: Buffalo, New York
June 7, 2021

S/ Patrick J. Brown

Patrick J. Brown, Esq.
Attorney for the Defendant
Losi & Gangi, PLLC.
147 Linwood Avenue
Buffalo, New York 14209
(716) 854-1446
pbrown@losi-gangi.com

Joseph M. Tripi, Esq.
Assistant U.S. Attorney
138 Delaware Avenue
Buffalo, New York 14202

Susan C. Desautels
United States Probation Service
2 Niagara Square
Buffalo, New York 14202

To the Honorable Judge Sinatra,

My name is Adam Johns and I'm a teacher at International Preparatory School at Grover. I am a long-time friend and colleague of Mike Masecchia. I have known and worked with Mike for over a decade. He has been a true friend, a dedicated professional to students and just a great soul no matter the capacity in which he's helped in.

Mike has been a great asset to my growth and development in the professional world of education. As a Teacher Aid of 9 years, I worked with many educators. Mike as a seasoned teacher inspired and encouraged me to advance myself into the field of education. Many of my friends that grew up on the lower westside attended Grover Cleveland High School. Mike taught many of them as we were growing up and they would always share stories of how he was a great teacher and positive impact in their lives. The moment anyone found out I was working at Grover that would ask "How is Mr. Masecchia", or they would immediately go into some story of "When I went there, there was this cool English teacher..", and immediately I'd know they're speaking about Mike; my colleague and friend. Hearing and seeing that impact on my friends almost two decades later, showed me the effect teachers have on their students. Mike's success is one of the few reasons I decided to further my education and become a Teacher.

I write this letter to show Mike's everlasting effect on our community. He has been an educator to not only my friends, but friends who now have many impacts on Buffalo and have since moved around the country. Some are fraternity brothers who make our city better, educators of our youth and college students, NFL players and more. One person's effect can impact a community and Mike has done just that.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Adam Johns". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal line extending from the end of the name.

Adam Johns

Honorable Judge Sinatra

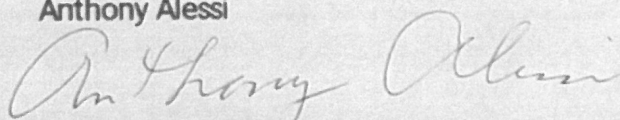
My name is Anthony Alessi and I am a Physical Education Teacher and Coach for the Buffalo Public Schools. I have been employed by the Buffalo Board of Education for the past 28 years. I have also had the pleasure of working with the defendant Michael Masecchia for all of those 28 years. In all of my 28 years as a teacher, I have never seen a teacher who was more caring, helpful, motivating, and comical as Michael Masecchia. These qualities brought the best out of his students.

I was there when Michael Masecchia bought his entire class breakfast sandwiches in the morning because they were hungry. I was there when his students thanked him after crossing the stage at graduation. I was there when he brought food to a co-worker when their spouse was going through cancer treatment. I was there when he took a group of inner city students tubing at Holiday Valley. I was there when he drove a Soccer player down to Akron to get noticed and changed his life by getting recruited. I was there when he assisted me in taking the Soccer Team to Middletown, NY that helped win the 2014 State Championship.

Please consider this letter in sentencing and exercise leniency. Michael Masecchia has so many good qualities in a person.

Sincerely,

Anthony Alessi

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Anthony Alessi". The signature is written in dark ink and is positioned above the printed name and title.

Physical Education Teacher/Coach

Buffalo Public Schools

March 3, 2021

Dear Judge Sinatra,

I am writing this letter on the behalf of Michael Masecchia. I worked with Mike for over ten years. Mike is well known and loved by his students and colleagues for his Shakespearean voice and his generous nature. Mike and I both served as English teachers for the Buffalo Public Schools. We started off as colleagues who shared a love for literature. Very quickly we became friends that shared a love of helping children and giving them hope, especially children that experience extreme poverty. Mike is a caring human being and I am glad to share with you a quick glimpse into his true character.

Mike and I worked in the English Department at The International Preparatory School for several years. I have always known Mike to be a kind and generous person. I learned a lot about Mike many years ago when he and I organized a field trip together. In 2015, Mike and I took a group of about 30 students to see the movie *Selma*, at the Regal Theater on Elmwood Avenue. He and I both taught sophomores and we were reading Dr. Martin Luther King's, *A Letter from a Birmingham Jail*. We thought the movie would be a perfect companion text to draw parallels from.

Mike arranged for the bussing and I handled the permission slips. This was a district sponsored field trip and 30 students and their chaperones from every high school in Buffalo were allowed to attend. We thought the students would not need to pay for anything. We were wrong. Students from other high schools were allowed to go to the concession stands and buy snacks before the movie started. Mike and I did not prepare for this; we did not tell our kids to bring money. Even if we did prepare, chances are that our students would never be able to afford \$12 popcorn or \$7 slices of pizza. Once we realized that our kids were embarrassed and sad, Mike jumped into action. I gave Mike a few dollars that I had stuffed in my wallet, which wasn't much. Mike covered the rest. He went and stood in line and made several trips back and forth to ensure that all of the children had a snack. Mike missed the first 15 minutes of the movie because he made several trips to the concession stand. That may not sound like a big deal, but to a kid that has never gone to the movies before or who has never had a real "movie experience" with all of the fixings, this was a big deal. Mike made their day, poverty did not separate them from their peers.

Mike is a great teacher but more importantly a great human being. He taught English but he mainly taught kids about being kind to one another and treating each other like family. He led by example.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Danielle Womack". The signature is written in dark ink and is positioned above the printed name.

Danielle Womack



Buffalo Public Schools

MIDDLE EARLY COLLEGE HIGH SCHOOL

Tenacity..Opportunity..College

Dr. Kriner Cash, Superintendent

David J. Potter
Principal

William P. Merriman
Assistant Principal

Judge Sinatra:

My name is David Potter and I am currently the principal at Middle Early College High School in Buffalo. I was a co-worker with Michael at Grover Cleveland High School and taught English in the room next to him.

No one took the time to care about his students the way Michael did to ensure they not only learned/passed ELA, but also so they felt significant. One example that exemplifies this is that before each holiday during the school year we worked together, Michael took turns with each of his classes and ordered them a catered lunch. In addition, he stayed after school to work with his students whenever they needed help and always took the time to ensure they were ok.

Thank you for your time reading this letter and your consideration of it when sentencing Michael.

David J. Potter
Principal; MECHS

2885 Main Street
(716) 816-4010

Buffalo, New York 14214
Fax (716) 838-7507

February 21, 2021

Judge Sinatra,

I have known Michael Masecchia for approximately 12 years. I was the Assistant Principal at International Preparatory High School in the Buffalo Public School System where Michael Masecchia was a High School English teacher.

In my role as Assistant Principal, I observed Michael Masecchia to be a dedicated and respected member of the faculty. He was always positive and had trusting relationships with the Administrators, Staff and students.

Michael understood the many challenges facing urban students in their personal lives and he supported them as much as possible. He was aware that students may not be fed and were hungry so he brought groceries to school to make students sandwiches using his own Panini machine.

Michael Masecchia was very protective of students who were getting bullied by other students. He would often pull kids aside and talk to them about being kind, being nice and being respectful to others. His efforts would often diffuse situations that could escalate to violence. Students were grateful and they knew that he genuinely cared.

Michael Masecchia also volunteered to support students by becoming the Varsity Soccer Coach. I was present when the School Principal asked Michael Masecchia if he would take the vacant position because no one else was willing and the students desperately needed a coach. Michael Masecchia, as usual, said "Yes" because he was always willing to help in any way. His leadership as Coach unified students and led the 'I Prep' Team to a State Championship win. His involvement brought the entire school and community together in ways that the students will never forget.

I thank you for reading this letter. Please consider the information contained in this letter in sentencing Michael Masecchia.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Dr. Gabrielle Morquecho". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Dr. Gabrielle Morquecho, Principal
Hutchinson Central Technical High School

Gino Arbore
103 Glen Haven Road
Rochester, N.Y. 14609

February 10, 2021

Dear Judge Sinatra:

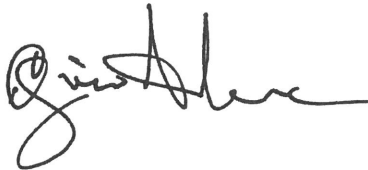
I am writing this letter in support of my friend, Michael Masecchia. My name is Gino Arbore; I am a retired Sheriff's Deputy from Monroe County. I have known Mike for more than 20 years. Since meeting Mike, I have known him to be a caring and respectful man. He has always been a true gentleman and true to his word. Mike, a former high school teacher whom many admired, has coached and mentored many kids in various sports. His enthusiasm has led to many good works in society.

He has a loving wife, Krista, two beautiful daughters and a son who mean the world to him. I have talked with Mike about his situation, and he told me he has learned from this experience and strives to make amends and change. Mike has substantial support from family and friends. He understands his responsibility to finish his sentence positively. He is looking forward to reuniting with his family.

Thank you for taking the time to read this letter.

Sincerely,

Gino Arbore

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Gino Arbore". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Gino" being more prominent and the last name "Arbore" written in a more connected, flowing style.

3/4/2021


Dear Judge Sinatra:

I met Mike when I was a student in 7th grade at International Prep. He was my teacher off and on until I graduated in 2019.

If it wasn't for Mike, I probably wouldn't have graduated. Whenever I was going through hard times in life, he was always there for me, even if I wasn't in his class. He would always make time for me. He was one of the few teachers who really wanted to see black kids and kids from other countries succeed. When I was having trouble passing the English Regents exam, he helped me study in his own time.

Thank you for taking the time to read this letter. I hope that when you are sentencing him, you will consider the positive impact he made in my life and so many other kids.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Isreal Sherfield". The script is cursive and fluid, with the first name "Isreal" and last name "Sherfield" clearly legible.

Isreal Sherfield

March 1, 2021

Dear Judge Sinatra,

My name is Jeanne Stewart. I am a friend of Mike Masecchia. I met Mike 12 years ago when he was the head coach of my youngest son Joseph's youth football team with the Town of Tonawanda Football Association (TTFA). During Mike's 5 years of coaching my son Joseph's team, I became close with Mike and his wife Krista and their children, daughters Jenna and Siena as well as his son Mike, whom I consider all good friends.

Shortly after Mike started coaching my son, my husband was diagnosed with amyloidosis, a rare, fatal disease. Two years later, my husband passed away. It was a difficult time for myself and my three children who were aged 14, 11 and Joseph, who was only 9. During my husband's illness and after his passing, Mike displayed extraordinary kindness and generosity to my son, Joseph. He took him under his wing as a coach and took him on many outings with his family and other teammates, among them; Buffalo Bills games, Bison Baseball games and cabin trips. He offered him advice and stood in as a father figure for my son who was very young and confused after the passing of his father. I will always be grateful to Mike for the kindness and generosity he offered to my Joseph during such a tumultuous time.

Since the years Mike coached my youngest son Joseph, my oldest son James started dating Mike's daughter, Siena. They have been dating for 2 years. I love Siena as my own daughter. She is a kind, wonderful, educated young woman with a master's degree in social work, working hard to make a positive impact in the world. She is a testament to the upbringing she received from Mike as a father and family man. As he did with my son Joseph, Mike has been a father figure to James and has had a very positive impact on him as a young man.

Mike has had a positive, lifelong impact on both of my sons Joseph and James, as a coach and as a father figure. I ask that you please take into consideration this letter and show leniency as you determine sentencing for Mike. Thank you for your time.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Jeanne M. Stewart". The signature is written in dark ink and is positioned above the printed name.

Jeanne M. Stewart

From the Desk Of:

Kevin J. Eberle, Ed.D.
Principal, Buffalo Public Schools

February 20, 2021

To: Judge John L Sinatra, Jr.
United States District Court
Western District of New York

The Honorable Judge Sinatra;

Please accept this correspondence in reference to Michael Masecchia. I have known Mike for eighteen years as a building principal, Chief Operations Officer and friend within the Buffalo Public School system. I was his immediate supervisor at Grover Cleveland High School as he taught English to various students throughout his career. As many who know Grover Cleveland High School, it has been designated as the International High School. At one point there have been fifty countries represented with students speaking over forty-five different languages. As an English teacher, Mike Masecchia established himself as one of our lead teachers supporting all students to become very well accomplished with their studies. Within this diverse group of students, there was a caveat to the most challenging school in the city; gangs and gang activity. As a building principal for over twenty-five years, I can attest to the professionalism and outright compassion Michael Masecchia established with each and every student, no matter what neighborhood, culture or gang they were affiliated with.

In the early 2000's, it was essential to have a teacher with the caliber of intelligence, personality and sense of humor that Mike exhibited to manage a building of our size. We had over one thousand students in those days and we established an effective learning environment by establishing close relationships with our students. Mike was the lead in the entire school to change a dysfunctional school into an environment where students began to feel safe just by a simple smile or hug. Mike was involved as a coach with football and soccer. These two sports were a second classroom for Mike. His confidence, skills and overall presence on the sports field created close relationships with his students. There were times that he would literally take the shirt off his back to support these kids. He set up funding sources and donations for students to have their own sports cleats just to play soccer. I could go on with many more stories but I must leave you with one final note of Mike's compassion for not only students, but for his colleagues. He would always be there for any teacher who was having a bad day with students or a personal family situation. This unconditional regard for both students and staff exemplifies the character of Michael Masecchia and I wish to express my personal and professional gratitude for this man. Your Honor; I wish to express my gratitude for you taking the time to read a short excerpt of Mike's educational experiences and would ask you for any consideration for leniency in his sentencing. Thank you for your consideration in this matter

Sincerely,


Dr. Kevin J. Eberle

February 24, 2021

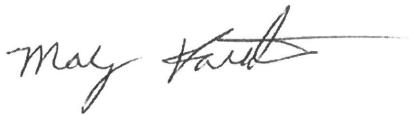
To The Honorable Judge Sinatra,

I am writing this letter as a testament of character for Mike Masecchia. My name is Mary Favata, I am a Special Education teacher and the Union chair at International Preparatory school in Buffalo. I have known Mike for more than twelve years, he is a dedicated and enthusiastic teacher with a big heart who has a love for children. He has a caring nature and his generosity has no limits.

Mike would spend every morning eating breakfast with the special needs children. He would come to my class on his free time and my developmentally delayed students would visibly light up. He would bring them breakfast often. He would sit and talk to them; they always felt special that this wonderful teacher took the time out of his busy day to spend with my class. We had a student that was being bullied about his appearance and we would brainstorm how to make this student feel accepted. Mike didn't hesitate to take him under his wing. He bought him acne medicine and made it known to the other kids that he was his friend. The students realized what this young man had to offer and this teenagers life was forever changed. From that point forward he gained confidence with the loving guidance of Mike and has gone on to become successful in the community. I know Mike played a big role in this child's success. These are just two examples of the kind of man Mike is but there are hundreds of other times Mike went above and beyond for his students.

I hope that you consider what an outstanding man Mike is and the impact he has had on the community. He has made a positive difference in so many lives and has encouraged many young people to become upstanding members of society.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Mary Favata', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Mary Favata

Melissa Zambarda
323 Burroughs Drive
Snyder, NY 14226

February 19, 2021

Dear Judge Sinatra,

My name is Melissa Zambarda and I have been a colleague and friend of Mike Masecchia for 15 years. I first met Mike at Grover Cleveland High School when I was assigned as his high school English Special Education Consult Teacher. At that time, I was returning back to teaching after staying at home with my boys for 7 years. This position was my first inner city job and at that time the halls and classrooms could be chaotic with layers of tough students and neighborhood gang members. When I stepped into Mike's classroom, I was amazed at the respect and the interest the students gave "Mr. Mike". He drew students into his classroom because of his unique ability to make the English curriculum interesting to all. Perhaps it is the way he can read aloud a story using different character accents or the way he can break down information for all to understand and want to engage. He taught his students to write and to pass the English Regents exam.

Besides academic connections he treated the students with kindness, humor, concern and generosity. He hosted Christmas feasts for over 100 students, encouraging them to bring dishes from their cultures to share and made every dish he tried seem amazing. Many of these students lack a male presence in their lives and Mike gave that to them with attention, conversation and care even if it was only a few minutes a day. A special memory that I have is when Mike purchased \$100 acne medicine for a student of mine who was suffering from horrible acne. He mentioned that he could not afford it and Mike automatically told him that he would cover the costs and soon his self-esteem sky rocketed.

Five years ago my position was changed to a 6:1:1 Community Based special education class. The class consisted of students who were intellectually delayed, autistic and had multiple disabilities. From day one, Mike came into my class and sat for breakfast almost daily with my students. He would talk, joke and assist them in any way he could. The highlight of their day was running into "Mr. Mike" when we were in the hallways. He would encourage conversations, take them to the weight room on his breaks, have them run errands, give them money so they could practice their shopping skills. At times he would give up his prep to come out in the community with the class, join them at their grocery store worksite and take them to lunch. He presented them with kindness and happiness so in turn they smiled and felt important.

Thank you for reading this letter. Mike has done so many positive things for the students of Buffalo Public Schools, far too many that I can list. He has a caring heart and should not be defined only by this unfortunate situation. I hope you will consider leniency in his sentencing.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Melissa Zambarda". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Melissa Zambarda

Nicolas Grabowski
4225 Arthur Court
Hamburg, NY 14075

February 24, 2021

To The Honorable Judge Sinatra,

I am writing this letter as a testament of character for Michael Massechia. My name is Nicolas Grabowski and I've worked with Michael for multiple years at International Preparatory School #198 in Buffalo, NY. In that time, we have become friends both in and out of work and Michael became a mentor to me within the education system. He has always struck me as an overly generous and caring person with a gift for teaching.

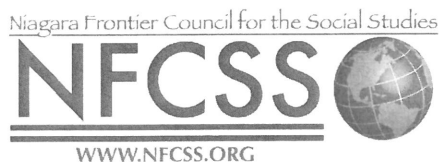
As a friend and co-worker of Michael, I was able to observe the relationships he built with co-workers and students. I came into the school as his substitute teacher and upon his return, was able to work in the same classroom with him for an extended time. I was fortunate to watch him create personalized relationships with each student in the classroom. He treated the students like they were family and had a unique way of getting through to each student in the class. He became my mentor in my first year of teaching and instilled his methodology in me. I am forever grateful that I was able to learn from someone who put so much time into perfecting his craft as a teacher and to this day I don't think I will ever meet a teacher who could get through to students as easily as Michael could. I recall a time when a young student came into class very hungry and complaining that they did not feel well. Michael proceeded to offer the student his lunch. He made sure that the student ate it and felt better before leaving class. He always put other's needs before his own and never thought twice about helping others, whether it was a student or another teacher.

It is my hope that you will consider this letter in sentencing Michael. Michael is the finest and most caring teacher that I have ever met in my life. Even despite the current case, I believe Michael is a valuable member of this community and an even better person.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Nicolas Grabowski". The signature is written in dark ink and is positioned below the word "Sincerely,".

Nicolas Grabowski



Niagara Frontier Council for the Social Studies

229 W. Genesee St. Suite #1113 Buffalo, New York 14202 (716) 220-8507
Website: www.NFCSS.org Email: NiagaraFrontierCSS@Gmail.com Twitter: [@NFCSSHistoryWNY](https://twitter.com/NFCSSHistoryWNY)

Proudly Serving All Eight Western New York Counties

March 10, 2021

Dear Judge Sinatra,

My name is Richard Pyszczeck, Jr and I am the President of the Niagara Frontier Council for the Social Studies and a 22-year employee of the Buffalo Public Schools. I've known Mike Masecchia since 1995 and since that time I would say he is one of my closest friends.

When my mom was diagnosed with terminal stage 4 cancer in 2001, he was one of my family's biggest supporters. He made sure the students in my Grade 11 & 12 Social Studies courses at Grover Cleveland H.S. were not falling behind in their academic pursuits while I was caring for my mother. When my mother passed away, he was there for me and my family as we made funeral arrangements. Mike was also a pall bearer for my mother at her funeral, this type of friendship and loyalty is not easy to come by.

Mike has been a vital member of the Grover Cleveland high school faculty for the last 3 decades teaching ELA III; he is always willing to lend a hand to support our students. He personally organizes an annual Thanksgiving Dinner for our ENL students at Grover Cleveland and International Preparatory at Grover Cleveland. He quietly supported our students by helping them out with costs associated with the prom and graduation each year. Below are a couple of stories from the Buffalo News that show the impact that Mike has had on our students and school community;

- June 2000 Buffalo News Story: ***BPS Kids Make the Grade***
- February 2014 Buffalo News Story: ***For Ezana Kahsay, no matter where he is, soccer is his life***

Thank you for reading this letter and I would hope you would consider this in sentencing.

Sincerely,

Richard S. Pyszczeck, Jr.

Richard S. Pyszczeck, Jr.
NFCSS President

February 24, 2021

Dear Judge Sinatra,

My name is Rondelle Stone, and I am a long-time friend of Mike Masecchia.

Mike opened his heart and home to my child R-Son Stone. I reside in Atlanta, GA, however, we made the best decision for R-Son, which was for him to finish school in Buffalo three years ago. Mike welcomed R-Son, further into his heart and most importantly, his home, with no hesitation. Mike was a great role model, he supported and loved on my son as if he was his own.

Mike attended every football game and wrestling match R-Son was a part of. R-Son was hurt during his, football season and required surgery, Mike was right by his side. Mike even opened his door for me to stay with him for R-Son's recovery. Mike also played a big role in R-Son's recovery, taking him to Dr's appointments as well as physical therapy. Mike has always been a father figure in R-Son's life and I'm truly grateful for that.

I have always known Mike to be an honest, dependable, loving and caring man. Please exercise leniency in Mike's sentencing.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Rondelle Stone". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Rondelle Stone

March 11, 2021

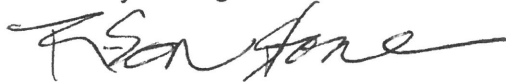
Dear Honorable Judge Sinatra,

My name is R-Son Stone. Mr. Masecchia's son Michael and I have been best friends since 7th grade. During my sophomore year of high school, Mr. Masecchia took me in and allowed me to live with him and his family, until my senior year. Ever since then, I have thought of him as my second father and mentor. Mr. Masecchia taught me things about the world that I was never shown by my biological father.

Mr. Masecchia pushed me to pursue my dreams of playing college football, he drove me to countless practices and games, just to support me. Even when the football season ended, he continued to support me at wrestling matches and lacrosse games. Through the years I stayed with Mr. Masecchia, we bonded together, he would always be the center of attention laughing, smiling and making jokes. Even when introducing me to family, he would call me his son and I still thank him to this day.

Please consider this letter in the sentencing of Mr. Masecchia because he was not only a father and mentor to me, but also to the students he taught and other athletes lives that he touched with his inspiring words and actions.

Thank you Judge Sinatra,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "R-Son Stone". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style with a long horizontal line extending from the end.

R-Son Stone

To Judge Sinatra,

My name is Steven means. I play in the NFL for the Atlanta Falcons and I am also a graduate and Alumni of Grover Cleveland High School! During my time there, there were a handful of people that impacted me as a young man growing up in a treacherous world. Mr. Michael Masecchia (Mr. Mike as we called him) was one of those people. Trapped between stepping into the world as a teenager full of bad influences on one hand, and knowing how my parent raised me to be leader and not a follower on the other hand, Mr. Mike would often set me straight. I found myself on the brink of crossing that threshold many times, and more often than not Mr. Mike would be there to pull me back! He would often give me advice about the future that I couldn't see but he had already lived. About friends, girls, colleges, opportunities, etc... some people might not think much of it, but as a young boy growing up those words meant a lot to me.

He would say things like "hey big Steve, you got your whole life in front of you, don't let these things right now affect the rest of your life." I remember being very upset one time, and he came in the room with me and my coach smiling like he always did, with his shiny slick back pony tail and veins popping out of his biceps, and nudged me and said "what's it gonna be? You gonna grind now and be able to have fun the rest of your life, or are you gonna party and have fun now and then spend the rest of your life grinding and working?" Its words like that and people like Mr. Mike that made me see things different. I left school that day and started working out relentlessly.

Mr. Mike or Michael as you may be addressing him, is a good man. One that stopped me from making mistakes early on in my life. One who allowed me another chance at things. Which I turned those chamces into a, thus far 8 year NFL career chasing my dreams. This man is a good man! He is beloved amongst so many of my fellow classmates while being at school. I'm asking that he be grantd another chance, like the one he provided me.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Steven Means". The signature is written in dark ink and is positioned below the word "Sincerely,".

Steven Means

To judge Sinatra

My name is ezana Y kahsay. I was a former student of michael Masecchia, at grover cleveland Highschool. Since i've graduated from grover, i continued my education at the university of akron and graduated. Currently I am outside of the United States, following my dream of becoming a professional soccer player at the highest level possible, and all of this wouldn't have been possible without the effort of my teacher, mentor, and father figure Michael Masecchia.

Michael has been my mentor since I started attending grover Cleveland high school, a month after I landed in the United States as a refugee. I was just a 16 year old, without any idea of how life was supposed to look for me. He started by being my english teacher at first, then my soccer coach. I was raised by a single mother and by being around Michael I realized that a man has to take care of his family, and because of his example as a young man I started trying to make my mothers life easier. He took me to his home and showed me my first super bowl family party, which was one of the best days of my life. He also knew the love I had for soccer and made sure I attended a powerhouse for soccer in the country, a division 1 university (uni. Of akron), by raising money for the camp, hotel and food. On top of that, he drove me there personally, without hesitating. He took me to Akron because I've never been outside buffalo and to show me support, I have someone there for me at all times. Also, after i made it to the university, when fall came, we packed my stuff and took me to akron because my mother couldn't take off work and leave my baby sister. These are the highlights of my time with Michael, I could go on all day and tell you how he impacted my life but I would run out of paper. He never treated me differently from his own kids and that speaks volume as a person. His kindness wasn't only towards me but also to my teammates and former classmates. I never heard one person complain about his personality because he showed nothing but love and respect for others and it was reciprocated.

First I would like to thank you for reading this letter. Second , please exercise leniency in sentencing Michael because he is a kind hearted, family oriented man and I believe that he will do more good out in the world to help young people like me who have a little idea of how life is supposed to look like. I have lived in buffalo and I have seen how teachers impact their students on so many levels. They are second parents to us. even though he has made a poor decision at some point of his life, I know he is an all around good human. I believe we learn from our mistakes.

A handwritten signature in cursive script, reading "Ezana Kahsay". The signature is written in dark ink on a white background.

Mary Favata

6 Carla Lane

West Seneca, NY 14224

February 25, 2021

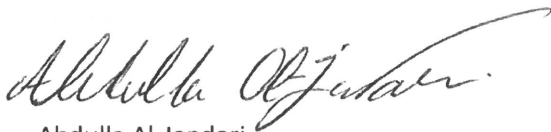
To Judge Sinatra,

I am writing this letter for Mike Masecchia. My name is Abdulla Al-Jandari, I am a teacher at International prep and translator for Arabic speaking students. I have known Mike for more than 25 years.

In all of my years in Buffalo Public schools I have never met a more compassionate and dedicated teacher. As an immigrant he always made me feel welcome and respected. The care he showed for our refugee students was above and beyond. Not only was he a patient teacher but he made sure they had what they needed outside of school as well. He often stayed after school with the Arabic speaking students and making sure they understood English. He could not let them leave without knowing if they were going to eat that night. If the students did not have food, he would make sure they were fed before they left. His leadership and big heart was known around the school.

Please take into consideration Mike's impact on the community. He has the ability to do great things and our community is better with him in it.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Abdulla Al-Jandari', with a long, sweeping horizontal line extending from the end of the signature.

Abdulla Al-Jandari